

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SINGAP 00436 011106Z

51

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 ISO-00 OMB-01 SAJ-01 IO-14

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 DRC-01

/146 W

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R 011000Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9990

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMZUR

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SINGAPORE 0436

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR,CH, SN, PF, PG

SUBJECT: PARACEL ISLJMD DISPUTE

REF: STATE 019749

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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PAGE 02 SINGAP 00436 011106Z

1. CHINESE LANGUAGE PRESS GAVE PARACEL STORY HEAVY NEWS PLAY. EDITORIAL REACTION WAS SPARSE. ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPERS, STRAITS TIMES AND NEW NATION BEGAN COVERAGE UNDER PAGE ONE BANNER HEADS, BUT AFTER FIRST DAY'S FLURRY REDUCED STORY TREATMENT TO ROUTINE. EDITORIALY BOTH PAPERS SAW INCIDENT AS HARMFUL TO EFFORTS OF PEKING TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH NATIONS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. CHINESE LANGUAGE PRESS ACCORDED STORY FRONT PAGE FOR FIRST FIVE DAYS AFTER CLASH AND THEN HAS CONTINUED CARRY PAGE ONE COVERAGE INCLUDING THIS MORNING'S STORIES ON RELEASE OF PRISONERS IN HONG KONG. NEWS STORIES ALL BASED ON WIRE SERVICE REPORTS BUT WERE OBVIOUSLY SELECTED FOR THEIR BIAS IN PEKING'S FAVOR. "PRO-CHINESE" NEWS COVERAGE ESPECIALLY HEAVY IN NANYANG SIANG PAO (75,000) BUT SO FAR NANYANG HAS CAREFULLY AVOIDED EDITORIAL COMMENT. OTHER MAJOR CHINESE LANGUAGE DAILY, SIN CHEW JIT POH (90,000), GAVE COMPARATIVELY LESS SPACE TO STORY, BUT TOOK -PRO PEKING EDITORIAL POSITION THAT WHILE US-CHINA DETENTE IS "APPARENT REASON" FOR US "NON-INTERVENTION" POLICY ON ISSUE, "REAL REASON IS THAT SOVEREIGNTY OVER PARACELS HAS LONG BEEN DETERMINED" (IN CHINA'S FAVOR).

2. GOS OFFICIALS HAVE MADE NO PUBLIC OR PRIVATE COMMENT ON PARACEL ISLAND DISPUTE/INCIDENT AND WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY CONTINUE TO REMAIN SILENT. GOS ENJOYS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SAIGON, RECOGNIZED DRV LAST YEAR AND HOPES TO DEALY ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH PEKING AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. ALTHOUGH GOS PROBABLY HAS GREATER SYMPATHY FOR GVN THAN ANY OTHER PARTIES TO DISPUTE, IT WILL CERTAINLY WISH TO AVOID GIVING NEEDLESS AFFRONT TO CHINA AND THE CHINESE-ORIENTED ELEMENTS OF ITS POPULATION ON THIS ISSUE. FOR THESE REASONS, IT WILL AVOID TAKING ANY POSITION OR BECOMING INVOLVED IN ANY WAY.
CRONK

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